

# The Future of Libraries



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## Abstract

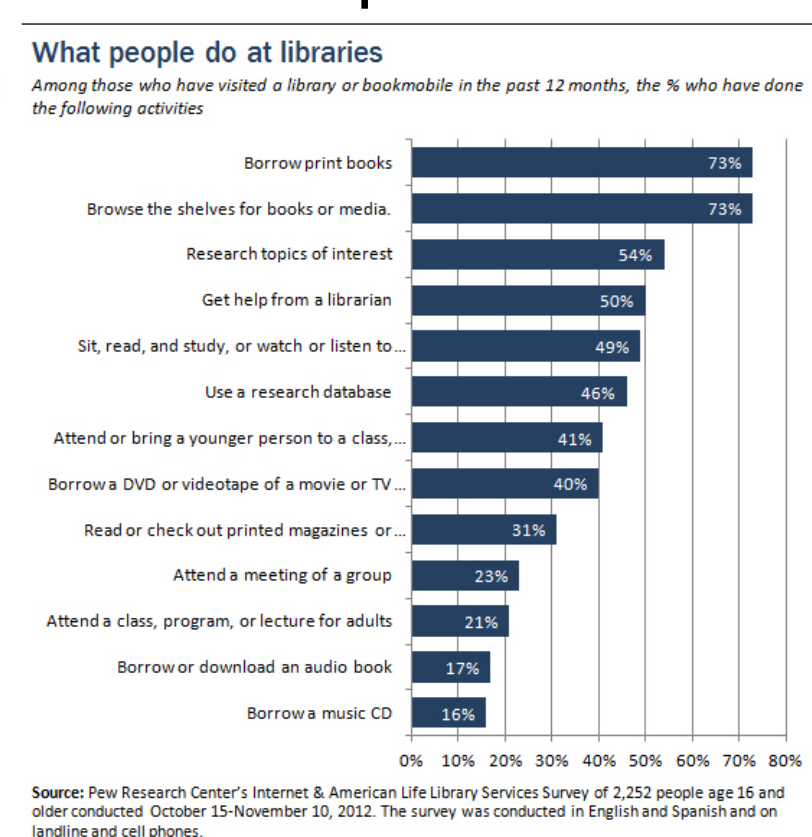
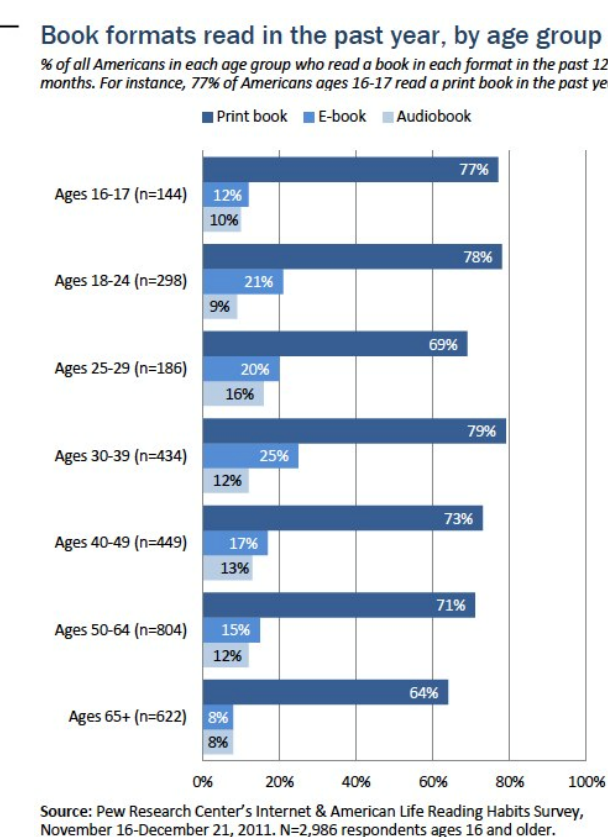
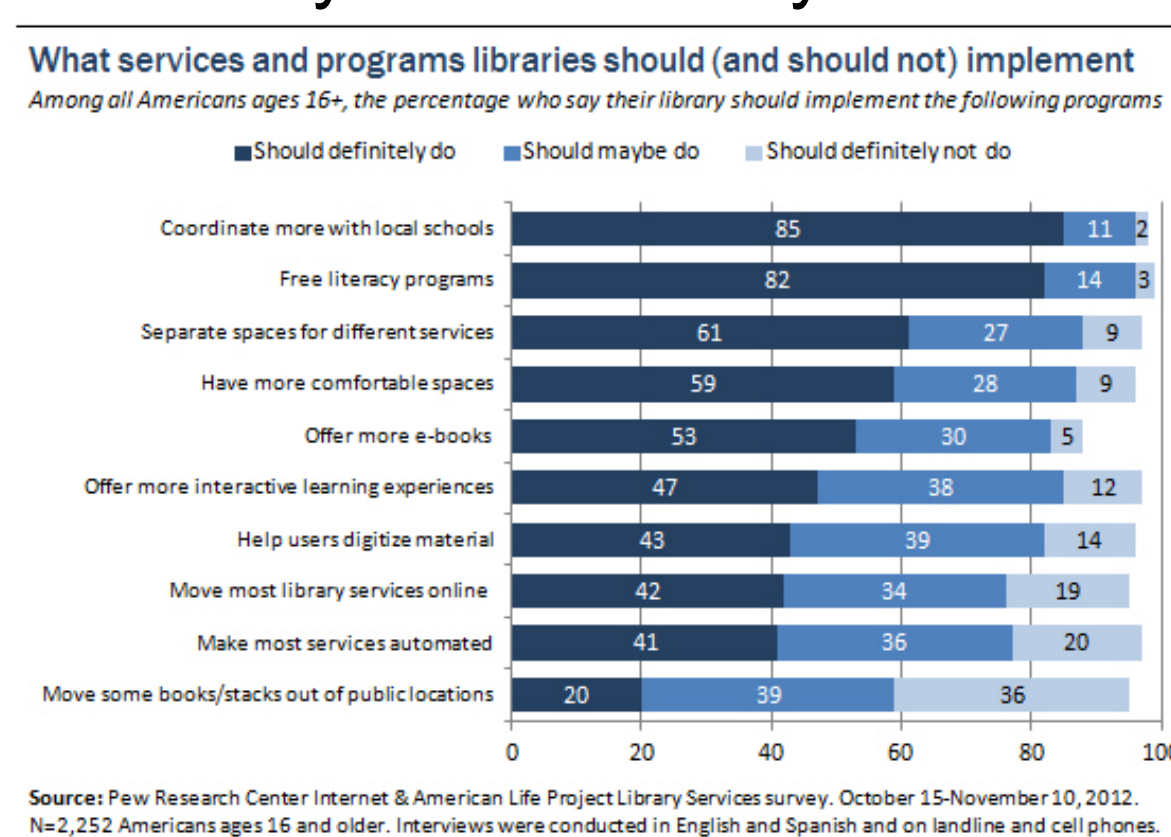
In the past decade, research has repeatedly shown a decrease in state funding for libraries and consequently a lowered interest in preserving libraries as a part of society. This has caused a lack of emphasis on community outreach and education as a whole. In order to remedy these problems, our class has spent the past few weeks brainstorming multiple ideas such as programs that should be included in libraries, more appealing library decor, and an architectural design that would enhance the opportunity for growth and discussion while still preserving the sense peace and tranquility that a library should provide. To us it is apparent that if just some parts of our plan are implemented, our primary goal to keep libraries, and therefore education, important to local communities can be achieved.

## Introduction

The concept of a library being an effective and efficient place for learning and enjoyment is rapidly deteriorating. Libraries are becoming less and less appealing to people; they are seen as an outdated remnant of an age that ended long ago. Technology drives the modern world, and people are constantly progressing toward new innovation. If libraries do not adapt to the technological age, people will quickly discard libraries as an ancient artifact. Libraries must transform from intimidating, old-fashioned, and out-of-date facilities to modern and inviting centers of learning and knowledge. They must integrate new technologies with a traditional library setting in order to appeal to learners of all ages. If libraries are able to create a space that combines modern elements such as an open area that encourages open discussion and collaboration with a classic library environment, libraries will once again thrive.

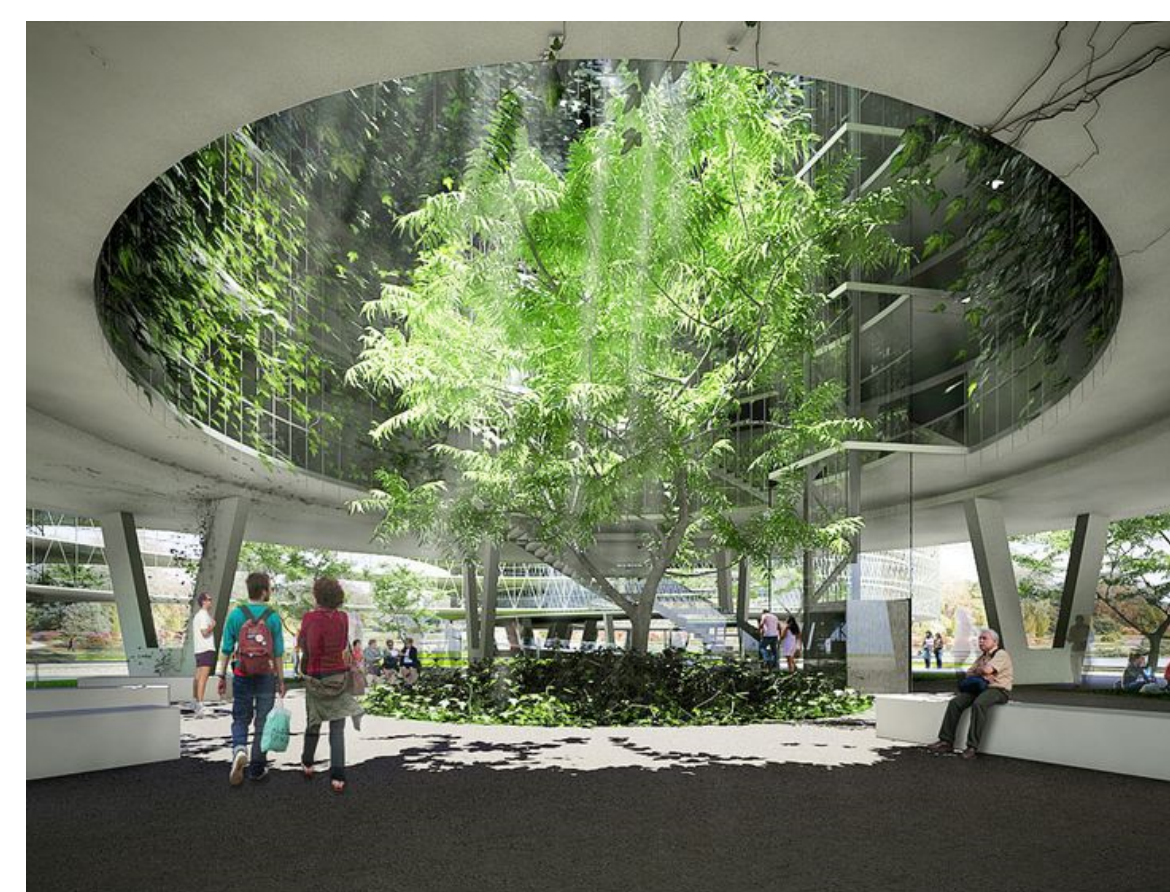
## Research

- Only 56% of Americans visited a public library in the last year.
- 23 states reported cuts in state funding to public libraries from 2010-2012.
- 7 states and the District of Columbia do not provide state funding for libraries.
- Nearly a quarter of library computer users, ages 14 and older, reported a library was their only source of access to the internet and computers.



## Proposed Ideas

- Incorporate new technology throughout the library
- Build a coffee shop with a surrounding area that is open to collaboration and discussion so people have a useful space to work together
- Although the modern library should be technologically advanced, it is important to have traditional sections of the library that help people who learn individually and quietly.
- Encourage learning by making libraries open spaces that allow lots of natural light and beauty to create an inspiring ambience. Examples include:
  - Outdoor courtyard, glass walls, windows, and natural decor such as plants etc.



- Make use of innovative technology and allow people access to technology to encourage learning. Examples include:
  - Introduce technology to library patrons that they would not normally have access to such as 3-D printers and high-power telescopes.
  - Allow e-readers to be available to check out. According to The BBC, 52% of college students prefer e-books to print. This is a significant group of people that libraries can serve better if they adapt to their needs and preferences.
  - Create an online database of non-fiction articles that people with library cards are free to use. That way, people can make us of a library even when it is not convenient to go to the physical location.
  - Increase the numbers and locations of outlets around the library. Also, add USB ports into some outlets to make outlets more user-friendly.

## Trends

- Technology Center
- Neighborhood Anchor
- Resource Center
- Workforce Training Center
- Preschool Learning Center
- Preserver of Local History
- Social Center
- Music and Art Center
- Community Center



## Conclusion

For several years, libraries have been considered a dying institution. While some people feel that this is an inconsequential casualty of progress, libraries have a long history of being centers for community learning. They are an invaluable resource for individuals and the community as a whole. By bringing educational value to the surrounding area and its people, libraries can continue to effectively serve the public. In order to continue to be useful, libraries must adapt to the technology age. They need to create new spaces that allow community learning and modern trends like coffee shops and e-readers to be a part of the library experience. They also need to reinvent the space to allow natural light and an open setting that encourages free thinking and learning while maintaining a traditional section to cater to learners of all ages and types. If libraries adapt to the modern world and innovate the way that they operate, they will once again become flourishing institutions



## Sources

### Works Cited

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